



**Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks**

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

1. Project Title: Polson Shooters Association

2. Type of Proposed Action:

The Polson Shooters Association proposes to increase parking at the Polson Shooters Range, including:

- Excavate and level a portion of the hillside above the existing parking area.
- Create a parking area on the hillside above the existing parking area to accommodate approximately 15 to 20 vehicles.
- Construct a road to the new parking area.
- Widen the existing entrance road and construct a retaining wall between the road and existing parking area.

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:

The Polson Shooters Association Range is located on 20 acres 3 miles southwest of Polson, Montana at 38386 Kerr Dam Road, Polson, Montana 59860 Lat. 47.66111, Long. -114.19528; Section 17, Township 22 North, Range 20 West.

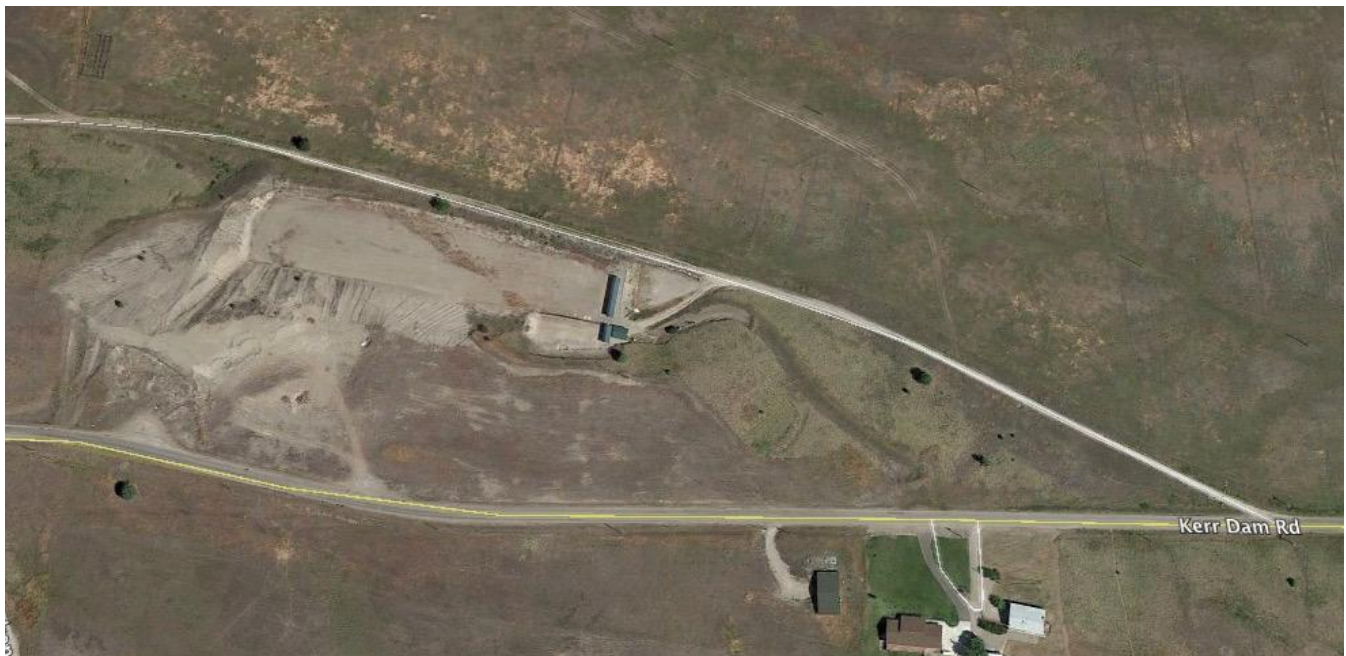


Figure 1. Polson Shooters Association Range, Montana.



Figure 2. Proposed Project Area for Polson Shooting Association Range, Polson, Montana.

4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action: MCA 87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) and MCA 87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has responsibility for the administration of the program, including the necessary guidelines and procedures governing applications for funding assistance under the program.

To be eligible for grant assistance, a private shooting club or a private organization:

- (a)(i) Shall accept in its membership any person who holds or is eligible to hold a Montana hunting license and who pays club or organization membership fees;*
- (ii) May not limit the number of members;*
- (iii) may charge a membership fee not greater than the per-member share of the club's or organization's reasonable cost of provision of services, including establishment, improvement, and maintenance of shooting facilities and other membership services; and*
- (iv) shall offer members occasional guest privileges at no cost to the member or invited guest and shall make a reasonable effort to hold a public sight-in day each September, when the general public may use the shooting range for a day-use fee or at no cost; or*
- (b) Shall admit the general public for a reasonable day-use fee.*

5. Need for the Action(s):

The size of shooting events that the Polson Shooters Association can hold at the Polson Shooters Association Range is limited by the range's limited parking area. Currently, all classes offered at the Polson Shooters

Association Range must be limited to six to eight students and three instructors. The Polson Shooters Association proposes to increase the parking area and create two disabled parking spaces by developing a parking area with a new exit road on the hill above the current parking area. The proposed funding will contribute to the long-term safety and usefulness of the facility for both experienced and beginning shooters.

6. Objectives for the Action(s):

In order to accommodate more participants in classes and shooting events, the 2015 objective for the Polson Shooters Association Range is to develop a new parking area to accommodate approximately 15 to 20 vehicles and a new exit road to accommodate more vehicles and vehicle movement through the parking area.

7. Project Size: estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:

The proposed project would involve approximately ten acres of the 20-acre Polson Shooters Association Range.

8. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):

The 20-acre Polson Shooters Association Range is located on public land leased from Lake County for a term of ten years commencing on September 1, 2013. The property is not located within a floodplain and there are no permanent surface waters or wetlands on the property. The range offers shooting opportunities for rifle, pistol, and black powder.

9. Description of Project:

▪ Construct retaining walls	\$37,245
▪ Dirt removal and grading	\$ 8,000
▪ Gravel for new road	\$ 1,500
▪ Equipment rental	\$ 3,400
▪ Fuel	<u>\$ 450</u>
▪ Total Project Budget	\$50,645
▪ Total Funding Requested	\$25,322

10. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:

None

Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
N/A		

Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$25,322

11. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:

The Polson Shooters Association Range is located on 20 acres of public land leased from Lake County for a term of ten years commencing on September 1, 2013. This is a private, not for profit range with an annual membership fee of \$30 for individuals and \$40 for families. The range is open to the public three afternoons per week for a fee of \$5 per shooter per day. The Polson Shooters Association hosts approximately 20 charity and training events per year. Organizations that have used the range in the past include: Lake County Sheriff's Department, Polson Police Department; Boy Scouts, 4-H, NRA, FWP Hunters Education, other local law enforcement organizations, and active duty military individuals. In addition, numerous activities sponsored by

the Polson Shooters Association are held at the range, including Well Armed Women, Winchester/NRA marksmanship, Basic Pistol, Basic Rifle, Personal Protection in the Home, various shooting competitions, shooting classes, and gun safety classes.

12. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement:

Because the Polson Shooters Association Range is a private range for members, there has been no public involvement in the planning process. Proposed range improvement proposals have been discussed with the club members and the associated project vendors and contractors.

13. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

14. Names, Address, and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:

Rob St.Clair, 502 9th Ave West, Polson, MT 59860, (406) 270-8886.

15. Other Pertinent Information:

Polson Shooters Association is a nonprofit private organization. The range is located between Missoula and Kalispell and serves these communities as well as smaller communities within easy driving distance of the range. The range offers rifle, pistol, and black powder shooting opportunities. The closest range providing similar shooting experiences is located in Ronan, Montana approximately 15 miles south of the Polson Shooters Association Range.

Shooting range applications require the participating governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range-funding assistance. Resolution Date: April 23, 2015.

PART II. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES

Alternative A, the **Proposed Alternative**, and **Alternative B**, the **No Action Alternative**, were considered.

- **Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** is as described in Part I, paragraph 9 (Description of Project): to develop a new parking area with new exit road. There are beneficial consequences to acceptance of the **Proposed Alternative**.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Range Development Grant money would be denied and the area will remain as an active shooting range without the proposed improvements. The no action alternative would have no significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences. The range will continue on with present conditions. Land use would remain the same.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented: Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent. Neither the proposed alternative nor the no action alternative would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:

None. Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There was no other alternative that was deemed reasonably available, or prudent. Neither the **Proposed Alternative** nor the **No Action Alternative** would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

List and explain proposed mitigating measures (stipulations):

None

PART III. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Abbreviated Checklist – The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmentally sensitive areas.

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		#2
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		#5
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		#8
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		#9
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		

2. & 5. There are no delineated wetlands and no natural water sources within the area proposed for development. No critical wildlife habitat would be affected. Any resident or transient wildlife may leave the immediate area during road re-surfacing activity.

8. Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions would be created during construction of the new parking area and exit road. However, the construction time is short and human effects will be limited due to the sparse population in the surrounding area.

9. This project uses no federal funds nor does it take place on state owned or controlled property; therefore, the Federal 106 Regulations and the State Antiques Act do not apply.

Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		
5. Human health				X		#5
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		#7
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

5. The proposed construction of a new parking area and exit road would improve the safety for members and the public using the range.

7. The proposed improvements to the Polson Shooters Association Range will improve the quality of the shooting sports within the community.

PART IV. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the projects reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The proposed projects are located on an existing range or on altered areas that together with the insignificant environmental effects of the proposed action, indicates that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative.

The Polson Shooters Association's Proposed Alternative, to provide a safe, regulated shooting opportunity, is supported by its members and the public. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the Proposed Alternative (A) for the improvements as outlined in Part I, Paragraph 9.

PART V. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur? No

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant? Individually, the proposed actions have minor impacts. However, it was determined that there are no significant or potentially significant cumulatively impacts. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:

There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative; therefore, an EIS is not required.

PART VI. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:

- Rob St.Clair, 502 9th Ave West, Polson, MT 59860, (406) 270-8886.
- MT Fish Wildlife and Parks

EA prepared by:

Andrea Darling
Darling Natural Resource Consulting
Montana City, MT 59634

Date Completed:

June 19, 2015

Describe public involvement, if any:

This draft EA will be advertised on FWP's web site and through a legal ad in the *Daily Inter Lake in Kalispell, MT* announcing a public comment period. A press release will also announce the project and comment period.